

Barbara A. Rhoades
1067 Barnwell Drive
Sumter, S.C. 29154

HONORABLE Donna Shalala
Secretary of Health and Human Services
200 Independence Avenue S.W.
Room 615F
Washington, D.C. 20201

Dear Secretary Shalala;

As an employee of a hearing aid center it has come to my attention that the Food and Drug Administration is proposing a revision to the present regulations governing hearing tests and the dispensing of hearing instruments.

On behalf of the numerous hearing impaired individuals with whom I work on a daily basis and those I see restricted by the already prohibitive costs, I would respectfully plead with you to not only negate this proposal but to work for and ensure that certified hearing aid specialists be recognized as trained professionals.

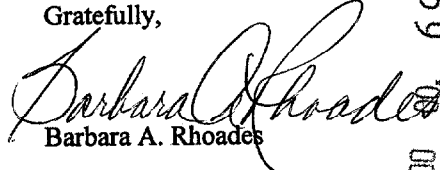
Persons with a hearing impairment are not only handicapped physically but financially. Worthwhile legislation would revolve around government and private sectors recognizing hearing disabilities and facilitating coverage or at the very least partial coverage for hearing implements. Not farther impeding these persons by limiting them to the higher cost of an audiologist exam solely, to obtain assistance.

The proposal to create such a monopoly would only succeed in escalating the hardships already imposed On the hearing handicapped individual. Those suffering the invisible handicap of hearing loss.

In closing, I would respectfully ask you to consider the ever-increasing aging population of this country most of whom are restricted to a limited fixed income. As their voice in government we beseech you to do what is only right and fair. Extend their avenues and increase their chances of getting aided.

Thank you for all your time and consideration in this matter. I am

Gratefully,


Barbara A. Rhoades

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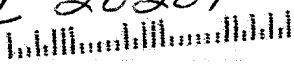
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A standard postal barcode is located below the address, consisting of a series of vertical bars of varying heights.